"My Beloved Is Mine"

(No. 2442)

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, DECEMBER 8, 1895.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 11, 1887.

"My beloved is mine, and I am His." Song of Solomon 2:16.

THIS is a short verse from the Song of Songs and I do not hesitate to say that it is the soul and heart of that Divine composition. The bride dressed in her richest poesy wears no jewel more precious than this diamond of full assured possession! There is poetry here which none of the sons of music can excel. It is the heart's minstrelsy at its very best. This little sonnet might be sung in Heaven and the golden harps would be well employed if every string went with the accompaniment. How I wish you could, each one, sing it now with a clear sweet voice!—

"Now I my best Beloved's am, And He is mine."

Alas, many of the Lord's own chosen and called ones are afraid to take up this chorus and join with us! I do not condemn them, but I am eager to comfort them. What would they give?—rather, what would they not give—if they could but say, "Christ is mine"? Yet they hesitate. The desire is strong, but the doubt is killing and they dare not sing with us. It seems too good, too great, too glorious a claim to come from their lips! They sometimes hope, but they as often fear. They make a dash for it, now and then, and trust that Christ is theirs—and then they subside into their former doubting. They are humble, modest, retiring—but I fear I must add—they are, at least in a measure, unbelieving!

I want to lead these true hearts up to the table that they may feast upon the dainties provided for faith. I know that even now, as they hear the text, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His," they are saying, "Happy people that can speak thus, but I cannot. I am afraid it would be presumption and, perhaps, hypocrisy, on my part, if I were to use such language." And yet, dear Heart, it is very possible that you have a perfect right to put in your claim—yes, and that you ought to be among the most confident and the most fully assured! What a pity it is that you should be losing so much joy! Yet some of the most true children of God walk in darkness at times and we have provision made for them under the circumstances— "Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness, and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Oh, that I might be the means, by His Grace, of enabling some of you to trust more bravely and hold to your Lord in the darkness—for soon that darkness would be over!

Did I hear one mourn his faults and lament his temptations? This need not be a hindrance! She who first sang this priceless stanza was, herself, warring against enemies.

Read the previous verse—"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." Instead of letting go her Lord to hunt the foxes, she clung the more to Him and joined Him with herself in the effort to take them. "Foxes or no foxes," she says, "my Beloved is mine." Jesus belongs to us in our imperfect condition—while yet we are beset with many mischievous and cunning foes! The Song before us is found in our own Bible, which is a Book to be used on earth rather than in Heaven. While yet the foxes prowl around us we may sing, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His."

Indeed, it is by strength derived from such a cheering confidence that we are enabled to kill these foxes and preserve the tender clusters of grapes till they are ripe for our Lord. Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us not do ourselves the serious hurt of refusing the greatest of blessings for reasons which are not valid! Let us mourn our faults, but let us not, therefore, forego our privileges! I will not let my Lord go because I see a fox. No, rather, I will cling to Him the more closely. If that fox should hurt my vine, yet I have a better Vine in my Lord, and one which no fox can touch! Away, you beasts of the field—you sins, doubts and fears—for my heart dares to sing, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His."

I feel that I am a bearer of a tenfold portion to the Benjamin of the family. Joseph—I mean, Jesus—has sent it and I am eager to deliver it fresh from His dear hands! O trembling Believer, it is all for you! Receive it and eat abundantly thereof. I am under the impression that my Master has bid me remember that there is a Ruth here who only desires to glean—and she trembles while she gathers a few scanty ears. She has not the courage to take a sheaf, herself, but my Lord has said, "Let fall handfuls on purpose for her." And I would try to do so, but I pray that timid Ruth may have courage enough to take up what I shall gladly let fall for her, for the good Boaz, in whose field I serve, has his eyes upon her and means more kindness to her than I can tell!

What I have to do, tonight, is to mention a few things which may help some timid one to say, "My Beloved is mine," and then to do the same with regard to the second sentence in the text, "I am His."

You ask, perhaps, "May I say, 'My Beloved is mine?'" You know who that Beloved is. I have no need to tell you that. He is the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely! You believe that it is He who is the ever-blessed Son of God, who became Man for our sake and, as the God-Man, made atonement for our sin and, having died, has risen from the dead and gone into His Father's within the veil where He ever makes intercession for us. It is that Christ who is the Light of Heaven, the Joy of everlasting bliss, the Adored of angels! It certainly does seem a great thing to call Him mine, to think that He should ever be mine, and that all He is, and all He has, and all He says, and all He does, and all He ever will be, is all mine! When a wife takes a husband to be hers, he becomes all hers, and she reckons that she has no divided possession in him. And it is certainly so with you, dear Heart, if Christ is yours. He is still yours and altogether yours even if it looks as though you were opening

your mouth very wide to be able to say it. Some of you were brought up in a school which is full of the Law and you are afraid to say what the Gospel permits you to say—you have not yet dared to avail yourselves of your privileges! Some of God's heirs are often kept in the back kitchen when they have a right to sit in the parlor and to eat of the dainties of their Lord! Some are kept from the joys to which they have a fair claim, so I am going to ask you a few questions to see whether you are one of them.

First, have you taken hold of Christ by faith? Faith is the hand with which we grasp the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you believed that Jesus is the Christ and that God has raised Him from the dead? Do you trust yourself wholly to Him? I say, "wholly"—with no other secret confidence. Do you lean your whole weight on Him? He that hangs on two branches, one of which is rotten, will go down. You had best trust your whole self with Christ and let Him be the top and bottom of your confidence. If you do that, then He is yours—this faith makes Him yours to your joyful experience! Listen to His own words—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If you believe in Christ, you have Christ to be your everlasting life and you may say, "My Beloved is mine."

I should hope that this is not a very difficult question for you to answer—you are either trusting in Christ or you are not. If you are not trusting in Christ, God forbid that I should exhort you to say what would be presumptuous! But if you are resting on Him who lived, loved and died that He might wash us from our sins in His blood—I say, if He is all your salvation and all your desire, then hesitate not to say, "My Beloved is mine." There is no surer claim in the world than the claim of faith! God has given Christ to every believing sinner—be he who he may—God has given Christ to him by a covenant of salt and Christ is his, and shall be his forever! Poor Trembler, if you believe on Him, even you may say, "My Beloved is mine."

Let me ask you another helpful question. Is He truly your Beloved, the Beloved of your soul? I remember well a dear Christian woman who frequently said to me, "I love Jesus, I know I do. But does He love me?" Her question used to make me smile. "Well," I said, "that is a question that I never put to myself—'If I love Him, does He love me?' No, the question that used to puzzle me was, 'Do I love Him?' When I could once settle that point, I was never again the victim of your form of doubt." If you love Christ, Christ loves you for sure, for your love to Christ is nothing more nor less than a beam out of the great sun of His love and the Grace that has created that love in your heart towards Him! If you do, indeed, love Him, proves that He loves you! Is it not so—"We love Him because He first loved us"? Did love ever get into the heart by any other door than that? I am sure that it never did! So that, if you love Him, you can say, "My Beloved is mine."

There are many who may love on earth and never obtain the object of their affection. But if you love Christ, raise no question about His love to you! He is yours and you are His!

That test may help someone who, perhaps, is standing trembling behind the door, full of blushes and afraid to come in among God's people. To you, poor timid Soul, we say, "Come in, you blessed of the Lord, why do you stand outside? If you love Him, you are welcome to all He has."

Next, I would help you with a third question. Is Jesus dear to you above all your possessions? Perhaps you have a great deal of this world's goods. Do you set small store by all that you have as compared with Jesus? Could you see it all burn away, or melt away, or be stolen, rather than lose Christ? If you can say, "Yes," to that question, then He is yours. Perhaps you have very little—a few earthly comforts, a narrow room and a scant pittance to live upon—but would you sooner have Christ than all the riches of the world, or would you be willing to sell Christ in order to rise in the world? Would you sell Him that you might be made rich, great and famous? You who are sick—which would you sooner have, your sickness and Christ, or go without Christ to be made healthy and strong? According to your answer to these enquiries will be my answer to the other questions, "Are you Christ's and is Christ yours?" I hope that many of you can say, "O Sir, we would give all that we have, we would suffer all that might be suffered, we would part with the very light and our eyes, too, if we could but be sure that we might, each one, truly say, 'My Beloved is mine.'" Well, if you love Christ beyond all earthly things, rest assured that He is yours!

Further, do you love Him beyond all earthly companions? Could you part with your dearest ones for His sake? Say, are you sure of this? Oh, then, He is assuredly yours! Do you love Him beyond all earthly objects? Yes, beyond the desire of learning, or honor, or position, or comfort—would you let all go for His dear sake? Many of His saints have had to do it and they have done it very cheerfully, and said with the Apostle, "Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him." Can you go that length? If you can, then surely He is yours!

Let me further help you by another question. Is Jesus so fully your hope and your trust that you have no other? I have often led persons into liberty through that question. They have said, "I am afraid that I do not trust Christ." I have then asked, "Well, what do you trust? Every man has a reliance of some sort—what are you trusting?" When I have pressed them closely, they have said, "Oh, we have no other trust! God forbid that we ever should have!" When I have mentioned their good works, they have said, "Good works? Why, we would be foolish, indeed, to talk of them!" When I have mentioned trusting in a priest, or in sacraments, they have scorned the thought—it has been loathsome to them. Then I have said, "If you have no other trust but Christ, and you are sure that you have a trust somewhere, then your trust is in Christ, and though you may question it, and doubt it, yet if you do so trust in Him as to trust nowhere else, He is yours and you are His."

There is many a good and true Believer who, nevertheless, is afraid that he is not a Believer. When you are once on board ship, even if the vessel is tossed to and fro and you, yourself, are ill, perhaps sadly seasick, yet as long as that ship does not go down, you will not go down—for your safety now does not depend upon your health and strength, but upon the ship into which you have entered! So, if you have fled to Christ away from everything else, then, though you may sigh, and cry, and fear, and tremble—for all of which I am sorry, for I would have every man on board ship to be well and strong and able to handle the ropes—still, if you cannot touch a rope, and if you cannot even eat your meals in your cabin, yet, if you are aboard the ship, and if that ship gets safe to land, so will you! Therefore, be of good cheer! O poor Heart, if you are clean divorced from every confidence but Christ, then I believe that you are married to Christ, notwithstanding that you tremble, sometimes, and ask whether it is so or not! Let that thought help you.

I would further help you in this way. If Christ is yours, your thoughts go after Him. You cannot say that you love a person if you never think of him. You could not, I am sure, let another person fill your heart as Christ must fill His people's hearts and yet never let that person occupy your thoughts. He to whom Christ belongs often thinks of Him. "Well," says one, "I am so busy during the day that, often, my mind is taken up with my business and I do not think of Christ." Do you know where those crows live that are feeding on that plowed field? They are going up and down the furrows, picking up all the worms they can find. And as you look at them, you cannot tell where their home is, can you? No, but wait till evening, when the day's feeding is over—then you will see which way the crows fly and you will find out where their nests are! Do you see how quickly they are winging their way to yonder rookery?

So is it with us—while we are busy in the world, picking up the worms, as it were, we have to think about those things. We cannot do our business properly without our thoughts going that way. But when the business is over, when the evening comes—which way do you go then? When you have an opportunity for thought, when your mind is going to its resting place—which way do your thoughts fly? That shall be the true test! And if, when your thoughts are set free, they fly away to Jesus, rest assured that He is yours! That thought may help some of you poor trembling ones.

We read of the Apostles, "Being let go, they went to their own company." Just so. I heard a working man who was expounding that chapter very well. He said, "If some fellows were put in prison and they were let out, they would go to the first public house they see, for that is where they would find their company. Just so—"birds of a feather flock together." Now when you are let go, when your mind gets out of the prison of your daily business, do you go to the world for your pleasure? Do you go to carnal things for your mirth, or do you fly to Christ? If you can answer, "My thoughts go naturally to Christ," then you can truly say, "My Beloved is mine."

Again, do you do more than this? Do you long for Christ's company? If, "my Beloved" is, indeed, mine, I shall want to see Him! I shall want to speak with Him. I shall want Him to abide with me. How is it with you? There is a great deal of religion in the world which only consists of shells, or husks—the kernels are not there at all. A man goes upstairs and kneels down for a quarter of an hour and he says that he is praying, yet possibly he has not really prayed at all. Another opens his Bible and he reads a chapter and he says that he has been studying the Scriptures. Perhaps it has been a mere mechanical act and there has been no heart and soul in it. John Bradford, the famous martyr, used to say, "I have made a point of this, that I will never go from a duty till I have had communion with Christ in it." And, when he prayed, he prayed till he did really pray. When he praised, he praised till he did truly praise. If he was bowing in humiliation before God, he humbled himself till he was actually humbled. If he was seeking communion with Christ, he would not go away with the pleasure of merely having sought, but he kept on seeking until he found, for he felt that he had done nothing aright till he had come into communion with God and into touch with Christ.

And, once more, if your Beloved is yours, you will acknowledge it to be so. Coming into this Tabernacle, or going down to the Communion Table, or gathering round the family altar—what is all that if Christ is not there? It should be with you as it is with a wife whose husband is far away across the sea. "Oh," she cries, "that I could hear the music of his footsteps! The rooms seem all empty now that he is away. There is his portrait on the wall, but it only makes me sigh the more for my Beloved. The very dog, as he comes in, seems to know that his master is away and he makes me think of him."

Is it so with you in regard to Christ? In every duty do you sigh for Him and long for Him? Holy Bernard was known to say and I believe that he could truly say it (it was in Latin, but I will give you the English of it), "O my Jesus, I never went from You without You!" He meant that he never left his knees and left Christ behind him. He never went out of the house of God and left Christ behind him. But he went through the outward act of devotion with a consciousness of the Presence of Christ. Now, if this is your habit—to keep up or to labor to keep up continued communion with Christ, and if you are longing for more and more of that communion—then, dear Friends, you are His, and He is yours!

Further, let me help you with a still closer question. Have you ever enjoyed that communion with Christ? Did you ever speak with Him? Have you ever heard His voice? I think I see you turning over the leaves of your diary! I hope you have not to go far back to read the record of your fellowship with your Lord. I hope that this morning was one instance of it and that this evening may be another! But are there not some special days, red-letter days, in your history? I recollect that Rutherford sent this message to one of his friends who was in great sorrow, "Tell him to remember Torwood." Nobody knew what was meant except the two who had been to Torwood where they had enjoyed such fellowship with Christ that

they could never forget it all their days! That is what David meant when He said, "Therefore will I remember You from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and the hill Mizar." Those were some choice spots that he remembered where the Lord had met with him!

How can Christ be yours if you know nothing about communion with Him? Are you married to Him if He has never shown you His face and you have never heard His voice, and never spoken with Him? But if you have had Christ's company, He has manifested Himself to you as He does not unto the world. He would never have shown you such things as these if you were not His. Ah, have you not, sometimes, crept out of the very dungeon of despair and seen your Lord's blessed face—and in a moment you have been dancing for joy? Have you not lain on the bed of sickness, "weary, and worn, and sad," till His Presence has made the chamber of affliction bright with the light of Heaven? Have you not, sometimes, at the dead of night, been weary in watching for sleep that would not come and your Lord has come to you— and then you have been afraid to go to sleep lest you should lose the joy of His Presence and wake up without Him?

Oh, some of us know what that experience means—when earth has been the vestibule of Heaven and when, even in our sickness and sadness, we have been on the very verge of Jordan—and we have smelt the fragrance of the spices that was wafted by the breath of the Spirit from the golden gardens on the other side of the stream! If you know anything experimentally about this matter, then you may conclude that your Beloved is, indeed, yours!

But supposing that you are not enjoying Christ's Presence, I am going to put another question to you. Are you cast down when He is away? If you have grieved His Spirit, are you grieved? If Christ is gone, do you feel as if the sun, itself, had ceased to shine and the candle of your existence had been snuffed out in utter darkness? Do you cry when He is away—

"What peaceful hours I then enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But now I find an aching void
The world can never fill"? Oh, then, He is yours! If you can not bear His absence, He is yours!

Last Thursday night I preached a sermon which was intended to be very searching one, and I hope that it was. It was upon the text, "Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Now see the difficulty of a poor minister! If I preach very comforting sermons, there are sure to be hypocrites who suck them down and say, "How delightful!" But when I preach a soul-searching sermon, some dear child of God, who is as precious to her Lord as gold tried in the furnace, takes everything to herself and begins to be very sorrowful, and to say, "That sharp knife is meant for me, for I am not one of the Lord's people!"

Well, after last Thursday night's sermon, a dear woman came to my vestry, brokenhearted, crying and sobbing. I hope that the discourse will be a blessing to her in the long

run, but I assure you that I never meant to preach to her at all! I was not aiming at her or at the sort of people to whom she belongs! It was a very different class whom I was addressing. If the preacher says anything about hypocrites, very often the hypocrites will not take it to heart, but the most sincere saint in the congregation very likely says, "Oh, I am afraid that I am a hypocrite!" If you are, you are an odd sort of hypocrite, for I never knew of a hypocrite who was afraid that he was one! He has not Grace enough for that kind of fear, but just goes on in the self-conceit that all is right with him. I, for my part, feel more confidence in the broken-hearted tremblers than I do in the boasters who never have a question about their being all right, but set it down as an undisputed fact that they are in the Covenant of Grace.

Beloved, I am glad if sometimes you moan like a dove and cry in the bitterness of your spirit, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" It may seem to be a spot on your character, but this spot is the spot of God's children and I am not sorry to see it upon you! If the Prince Immanuel has left the town of Mansoul, then there can be no marriage bells or joyous music there until He comes back. We must invite Him and entreat Him to return! We must clothe ourselves in sackcloth till He comes back! If we do not act thus, then He is not ours. If you can do without Christ, you shall do without Christ—but if you cannot do without Him, if you cry—

"Give me Christ, or else I die,"

then He shall be yours! Stretch out the hand of faith and take Him, and then say without hesitation, "My Beloved is mine."

1 am not going on to the rest of the text, but I want to say just this—if there is any man or woman here (and I know there are many), who can sit down in the pew and quietly say, "Yes, weighing everything the preacher has said, and judging myself as severely as I can, yet I dare take Christ to be mine and to say, 'My Beloved is mine.'" If that is your case, dear Friend, then you shall get confirmatory evidence of this fact by the witness of the Spirit within your soul which will very likely come to you in the form of perfect contentment of spirit, perfect rest of heart—

"When I can say, 'My God is mine,'
When I can feel Your glories shine;
I tread the world beneath my feet,

And all that earth calls good or great." "There," says the Believer, "now that my Beloved is mine, I have no other wish or need." Now will he be like Simeon when he took that blessed Baby into his arms. "Lord," he said, "now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word." "Have you nothing more to live for, Simeon?" "No," replies the good old man, "what more can there be?"

"Don't you think that if you lived a little longer, you might have a heavy purse of gold in your hands?" "Yes," he answers, "possibly I might, but it would be a cumbrous burden. This dear Child is better than all the gold and silver in the world. If He is mine, I have enough,

yes, I have all!" That blessed rest of soul, which comes of a sure possession of Christ, is not to be imitated—but it is greatly to be desired!

I know that some good people, who I believe will be saved, nevertheless do not attain to this sweet rest. They keep on thinking that it is something that they may get when they are very old, or when they are about to die—but they look upon the full assurance offaith and the personal grasping of Christ, and saying, "My Beloved is mine," as something very dangerous. I began my Christian life in this happy fashion as a boy 15 years of age. I believed fully and without hesitation in the Lord Jesus Christ. And when I went to see a good Christian woman, I was simpleton enough to tell her that I believed in Christ, that He was mine and that He had saved me. She said to me, "Ah, I don't like such assurance as that." And then she added, "I trust you are believing in Christ—I hope so—but I have never got beyond a hope, or a trust, and I am an old woman."

Bless the old woman, but she was no example for us who know whom we have believed—we are to rise infinitely beyond that groveling kind of life! The man who begins right, and the boy who begins right, and the girl who begins right will begin by saying, "God has said it—'He that believes on Him is not condemned.' I believe on Him, therefore I am not condemned! Christ is mine!" O dear Friends, do not always keep on with that miserable hoping, and hoping, and hopping! Walk on both your feet and get a good firm standing on the Rock of Ages—and say without boasting, but without doubting—"My Beloved is mine!" This will bring you into the condition of the Psalmist when he said, "He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters." David would never have said that if he had not begun the Psalm with, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

If He had begun by saying, "Perhaps the Lord is my Shepherd," he would have gone on to say, "Perhaps there may be green pastures, possibly there may be still waters; but as yet my soul is in a dry and thirsty land where is no water and not a blade of grass." Ah, David was not so stupid as that! He had his times of depression, but when he was singing that Psalm, he was in a positive, certain frame of mind! "The Lord is my Shepherd." He used the indicative mood, not the subjunctive or conditional! The Lord help you to do the same! And you may. If Christ is a satisfaction to your spirit, so that your soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, then do not hesitate to say and to emphasize the utterance, "My Beloved is mine." He either is, or He is not—which is it? Do not go to sleep tonight till you know!

If Christ is yours, Heaven is yours! If Christ is not yours, you are neither fit to live, nor fit to die. Remember that awful verse, "If any man loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha"—"let him be accursed, the Lord comes!" Take heed unto yourselves, therefore—if Christ is not yours, you are in terrible poverty! But if Christ is yours, you are eternally rich to all the intents of bliss! Oh, that He might be yours, now, by your stretching out the hand of faith and taking Him to yourself!

"I dare not take Him," says one. Well, you are a strange person! I dare not let Him alone and I challenge you to shape that, "dare," into any other proper form. If He bids you take Him and trust Him, how dare you refuse Him? Take Him, now, and be safe and happy forever! God bless you, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM63.

This is said to be, "A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah." I suppose, therefore, that it was composed when he fled from Jerusalem because of the cruel treachery of his son, Absalom. He must have been heart-broken, and stricken with the greatest possible sorrow as he fled away with his faithful followers into the wilderness of Judah. But even there he praised his God—and he did not sing to Him with old and stale Psalms, but with a new song! How restful and calm he must have been, in his great sorrow, to sit down, even in the wilderness of Judah, and make a new hymn of praise unto the Lord! How gloriously he begins!

Verse 1. O God, You are my God. The Psalmist has no doubt about this great fact! He does not hesitate or falter, but he makes the positive assertion, "O God, You are my El, my mighty God, strong to deliver me." In the 62nd Psalm, he had finished up with the power of God—"God has spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongs unto God."

So he begins this new song with the great name, El, which expresses the might and power of God—"O God, You are my El, my mighty God."

1. Early will I seek You: People in the wilderness have hard beds to lie on and they sleep fewer hours. David was up in the morning, early, and he began the day with prayer to God—"Early will I seek You." "While the dew is on the grass, the dew of the Spirit shall be upon my soul." He means, also, "I will seek You at once, immediately, now, without delay." But how could he seek the God who was already his God? "You are my God; early will I seek You." Brothers and Sisters, nobody ever seeks another man's God. Till God is your God, you will not want to seek Him. But when you have Him, you will seek Him yet more and more!

1. My soul thirsts for You. He had a strong passion for God. There is, sometimes, an unbearable, insatiable pang of the body which you cannot forget. And David had an insatiable longing of soul which nothing could make him forget— "My soul thirsts for You."

1. My flesh longs for You. Even his flesh, his body—not his carnal nature—but his body mastered by his soul, was caused to yield its little help towards the making of this verse—"My flesh longs for You."

1. In a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. And this world is just like that. To most Christians, the six days of the week take them through the wilderness and the Sabbath brings them to an oasis in the desert, an Elim, a place where there are wells of Living Water! But oh, what longings they have after God! What did David want when he was in the wilderness?

2. To see Your power and Your Glory, so as I have seen You in the sanctuary. He did not want the sanctuary so much as to see God in the sanctuary. Brethren, it is well to have a love to our own place of worship, but it is infinitely better to have a soul longing for the God we worship and to feel that the place of worship is nothing unless God is there.

3. Because Your loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. "In the wilderness, when my comforts are cut off, when my son, who was my darling, is seeking my life, my lips shall praise You, for still Your loving kindness is better than life."

4. Thus will I bless You while I live. "As long as I live, I will praise You. Every breath of mine shall be perfumed with thankfulness and adoration."

4. I will lift up my hands in Your name. "In astonishment at the power of Your great name, and in confidence will I lift them up when they have been hanging down in weakness. I will go forth in holy activity, with uplifted hands in Your name."

5. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. Orientals, in their feasts, are very fond of fat such as you and I would hardly eat—they think the fat is the choicest part of their diet. So David, using his own metaphor, says that God would satisfy his soul as with the very marrow and fatness of joys.

5. And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. A heart full of Grace makes a mouth full of praise! When God makes you inwardly to be content with yourself, you will be outwardly full of thanksgiving and praise.

6. When I remember You upon my bed, and meditate on You in the night watches. Of course, in the wilderness, they had to set a watch against Absalom and his men. And David very likely could hear the noise in the camp as they changed the sentries and marked the hours of the night. "Oh," he said, "while I lie awake, and the watchers are on guard all around, I will make the night to be a time of spiritual feasting—'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fat-ness'—and I will make a song at night unto the God who gives songs in the night. My mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.'"

7. 8. Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice. My soul follows hard after You. If he could not keep pace with his Lord and, in some measure lose the joy of walking with God, then he would run after Him. If you cannot lean on Christ's arm, keep close at Christ's heels! Be as near Him as you can, like a dog who keeps close to his master. "My soul follows hard after You." Where did David get the Grace and the strength to thus follow after God? Listen—

8. Your right hand upholds me. There is the secret upholding of Divine Grace even when the soul cannot attain the fellowship at which it aims! When we are struggling to be near to God, let us thank the Lord who, by His Spirit, works in us the heavenly ardor that makes us run to Him. The last three verses of the Psalm describe what would become of David's enemies.

9. But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. The wicked always grovel. They never rise to higher things and their course shall be downward—downward to the grave, downward to eternal death.

10. They shall fall by the sword. They took the sword—they shall perish by the sword. They were seeking to slay David—they shall be, themselves, slain.

10. They shall be a portion for foxes. Not for lions, but for foxes, or jackals—for that is the word—the jackals shall gnaw them in pieces.

11. But the king shall rejoice in God. David was the king, so you see that he did not rejoice in the slaughter of his enemies, but he did rejoice in his God.

11. Everyone that swears by Him shall glory. Those who were true and loyal to the king would have reason for rejoicing when the rebels were overthrown. And those who were true and loyal to God would have still greater reason for exultation!

11. But the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped. Every true man must be glad that it is so. The mouths of liars will be stopped by the sexton with a shovel full of earth, if in no other way. But every lying tongue in all the world shall be silent, one day, at the judgment bar of God. The Lord bless to us the reading of his Word! Amen.